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I am Navy Medicine: Sally J. Vickers

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Perhaps what has been most rewarding in my Navy Medicine career has been that, as a public health educator, my primary focus has been on prevention of disease rather than on treatment once the diagnosis of a disease or dis

By Sally J. Vickers

A few words from a Navy Medicine Public Health Educator: My career with Navy Medicine began in 1995 and it has been much more rewarding and exciting than I ever could have imagined.

With a BS in Food Science and Nutrition and an MS in Community Health Education, as a Certified Health Education Specialist I was initially hired as a Public Health Educator at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, responsible for the Nutrition and Weight Management Program in the Health Promotion Department. After three years, I then moved on to my current position at the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) (at that time known as the Navy Environmental Health Center or NEHC). As a public health educator on the staff of the Health Promotion and Wellness (HPW) Department, I am responsible for all general health promotion training, nutrition and am program manager for the ShipShape Program, Navy Medicine’s weight management program.

Growing up on a dairy farm in upstate New York, one of thirteen children, I never would have dreamed that my future career with Navy Medicine would take me to all corners of the

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United States as well as to Hawaii and to other countries, including Japan, Spain and Italy. My job has allowed me to travel extensively, training Navy Medicine and other Navy personnel regarding not only nutrition and weight management, but also on how to coordinate a health promotion program for their command.

Perhaps what has been most rewarding in my Navy Medicine career has been that, as a public health educator, my primary focus has been on prevention of disease rather than on treatment once the diagnosis of a disease or disorder has been made. The programs and resources provided by NMCPHC’s HPW Department focus on primary prevention. In other words, we provide programs and resources to assist Navy and Marine Corps personnel, their family members and other government employees in living a healthy lifestyle, either by continuing to have few or no lifestyle risk factors or by reducing their risk factors to avoid chronic disease.

To be able to go to work each day knowing that I am contributing to the efforts to reduce risks for chronic disease, with all of the burden that it places on an individual’s health and quality of life, not to mention the additional costs associated with it to Navy Medicine, is truly something to be thankful for.

My name is Sally J. Vickers...and I AM NAVY MEDICINE.

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